The mal, as a group of kindred, is thus a fluid patrilineal unit which can range from a single couple and their children to a much more numerous ensemble. It only includes male maternal relatives in cases of exceptional emergency. A man who finds himself without paternal relatives and left destitute for some reason may seek temporary shelter with his sister's husband. Similarly, a widow whose deceased husband's relatives cannot care for her and her children normally applies to her father or brother. Only in cases such as these are males belonging to another mal to be found in the household. The mal is not strictly a named group, although one can, for example, speak of the "Mali Shakir Effendi," referring, on one hand, to his house, and, on the other, to his family. The Kurds do not use family names, and, because of the immediate result of most marriages in forming new units, commoners rarely keep track of collateral relatives beyond the degree of first cousin or trace the direct patrilineal line more than one or two generations. The point of reference is usually one's father or one's son. One of the sons of Shakir Effendi is formally termed Aziz Shakir Mujjrim (the last is a nickname of his father), and the same person is occasionally called "Baba Nawzad," the father of Nawzad, from the name of his son, the second practice exactly like that of the Arabs. The mal can be endogamous or exogamous. The preferred match is between the children of two brothers, and, if both occupy the same house, marriage is thus within the mal-group. Otherwise, many marriages are arranged between unrelated families.

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Rowanduz a will is a legal instrument which must be formulated in the presence of the judge and registered with a katib al-'adil or government notary, either of the serai or the court. If a person dies intestate, as in the case of most persons of the lower classes, and a quarrel ensues over the disposition of his property, this must also be settled by court action. In general, however, each of the sons of the deceased is entitled to one share and each of the daughters to a half-share, after the widow has received a stipulated eighth of the total property. In the absence of some of these heirs, certain relatives in a fixed order may present claims for varying percentages, a subject too complicated to be examined in detail here. If the heir is an orphan, the property is administered by a department of the government, the Amwal al-Gasarin, until he reaches maturity. A woman usually disposes of her property, her dowry, jewelry, and household goods, as she pleases, although this too can be brought to the bar. Thus the quarrels and complications which can arise in inheritance are settled by action of the judge, and the townspeople themselves, unless they have been engaged in such a suit, know little of the intricacies.

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Two of the most striking features of Islamic inheritance are that a woman, although she is protected by certain specified percentages, does not receive a sum equal to that of a man, and that the estate of the deceased is not transferred intact to any one person, as in primogeniture, but is parcelled out among the several heirs,

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uncle (mam) loves the children of his brother as much as his own. If he has daughters, he gives them to his brother's sons as wives. If he is rich, he looks after his nephews and nieces, sending them clothing and money, and supporting the boys in school. If his brother dies, he takes the survivors of the deceased into his own house. When he comes for a visit, he brings gifts for the children. They shout, gathering around him, and the infants are placed on his knees." As in the case of the father and grandfather, boys and girls are expected to stand in the presence of the uncle. The maternal uncle (khal) is a much rarer visitor in the house, although he is also a potential parent-in-law and guardian. "Sometimes the maternal uncle does not like his sister's husband or her children." In the absence of relatives on the paternal side, a widow may apply to her brother for help. The paternal and maternal aunts (pilk) are much more frequent visitors if they do not live within the house itself. Relations with them do not require any extraordinary deferential conduct. The wives of the paternal and maternal uncles, if they are not consanguineal relatives, are treated with greater reserve. Visits are not ordinarily exchanged between a man and his maternal relatives except on infrequent occasions. When a paternal uncle, his wife, or a paternal aunt arrive, they are taken into the bosom of the family. In contrast, the maternal uncle or an unrelated husband of the paternal aunt are usually entertained in the diwankhana